

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6673

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 00676

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FT, FR

SUBJECT: TFAI

REF: ADDIS 196 (NOTAL)

1. QUAI DEPUTY DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA HAREL TOLD EMBOFF JAN. 8 THAT HE HAD NOT SEEN THE REUTERS REPORT CITING A JUNE 1976 INDEPENDENCE DATE FOR TFAI BUT AFFIRMED THAT SUCH AN EARLY DATE IS OUT OF THE QUESTION. HE THOUGHT INDEPENDENCE WOULD BE GRANTED IN ABOUT 18 MONTHS, ALTHOUGH A DATE AS EARLY AS JANUARY 1977 IS POSSIBLE.

2. HAREL AGAIN DESCRIBED THE DIFFICULTIES IN ARRANGING ADEQUATE GUARANTEES FOR AN INDEPENDENT TFAI. WHILE IT WOULD LIKE TO RETAIN BASE RIGHTS AND IS PREPARED TO ASSOCIATE ITSELF WITH INTERNATIONAL GUARANTEES, FRANCE IS DETERMINED NOT RPT NOT TO PLACE ITSELF IN THE

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POSITION OF BEING SOLE GUARANTOR OF TFAI'S INTERNAL

STABILITY AND EXTERNAL DEFENSE, SINCE THE FRENCH CONSIDER THEY ALONE COULD NOT RPT NOT MAINTAIN THE PRECARIOUS POLITICAL BALANCE IN THE REGION. IT IS CLEAR, HAREL ADDED, THAT WITHOUT FRENCH ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE AND MILITARY SUPPORT TFAI IS NOT RPT NOT A VIABLE ENTITY.

3. SOMALIA REMAINS THE MOST SERIOUS THREAT TO STABILITY, HAREL CONTINUED, AND EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE SOME SORT OF UNDERSTANDING WITH THE SOMALIS HAVE BEEN REBUFFED. THE ANGOLAN SITUATION HAS ADDED AN INTRIGUING FACTOR TO THE EQUATION. ON THE ONE HAND, THE FRENCH HOPE THEY CAN USE IT TO CONVINCE THE OAU AND THE ARAB LEAGUE THAT IN ORDER TO AVOID A SECON "ANGOLA" IN THE HORN, THEY SOULD PARTICIPATE IN GUARANTEES. ON THE OTHER, GIVEN SOVIET INTERVENTION IN ANGOLA, THE FRENCH BELIEVE THAT THE RESTRAINT MOSCOW PREVIOUSLY HAS SEEMED TO EXERCISE OVER THE SOMALIS MAY BE REPLACED BY A MORE ACTIVIST POLICY IN THE HORN.

4. SPEAKING "PERSONALLY", HAREL WONDERED WHETHER THE FRENCH WERE WELL-ADVISED TO CONTINUE TO COUNT ON ALI AREF, OR WHETHER THEY SHOULD BRING OTHERS INTO THE GOVERNMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION HE NOTED SOMALIA'S SPECIAL ANTIPATHY FOR ALI AREF, THE LATTER'S WEAK POLITICAL BASE AND THE DESIRABILITY OF CREATING A STRONG, REPRESENTATIVE TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT.

5. COMMENT: WE BELIEVE IT WOULD TAKE SOME UNEXPECTED, DRAMATIC EVENT TO CAUSE THE FRENCH TO ADVANCE THEIR PRESENT TIMETABLE BY MORE THAN A FEW WEEKS. MEANWHILE, THEY APPARENTLY HOPE ANGOLA'S MISFORTUNE MAY BE A USEFUL ARGUMENT IN GAINING OAU AND ARAB LEAGUE SUPPORT FOR GUARANTEES, ALTHOUGH THE SOVIETS' RECENT AGGRESSION DISTURBS THEM. IT ALSO SEEMS LIKELY THAT THE FRENCH WILL WORK TO CREATE A TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF TFAI POLITICAL FACTIONS THAT IS ALI AREF'S
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